

Jones Falls Meeting
January 14, 2015 Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Jim Gracie, Eric Schott, Roger Trageser, Margaret McGinty, Marek Topolski

The meeting began at 12:30pm:

Updates:

Jim Gracie shared some of his field notebooks with data dating back to the early 1970's to preview regarding Jones Falls.

Discussed each individual's history and knowledge of Jones Falls, and where their interests and goals are for developing a project:

- Jim Gracie: the MD Chapter of Trout Unlimited partnered with the Green Valley Garden Program and joined the Adopt-a-Stream program. Over 15 years developed water quality monitoring, litter pickups and fish monitoring, plus developed an outreach program for local schools to help with water quality monitoring. Jim is concerned about new threats to Jones Falls, need new/more protection due to the fact it is still a productive, wild trout stream in MD. Has data from 1973.

- Eric Schott: Has lived in the Stony Run area for around 20 years and is engaged in the Jones Falls Water Association and Blue Water Baltimore. Eric is interested in lower Jones Falls (more of the urban section near the Inner Harbor) due to his work to create a swimmable and fishable "healthy harbor" by 2020. Jones Falls (Patapsco Watershed) has an impact on the harbor. Eric is interested in identifying how improvements upstream could address the harbor or downstream areas of Jones Falls.

- Idea: Work with big land owners right there, private schools, to focus on a no net gain of impervious surface or a no net loss of pervious surface. Work on connecting the schools to the harbor.

Discussion over O'Dell's study indicating stream spawning habitat – is Jones Falls included? Is there spawning habitat in Jones Falls?

The group discussed the lack of data related to effectiveness of restoration. The workgroup needs to push for sound pre- and post-monitoring of restoration sites. Eric mentioned Stan Kemp's work to develop base line data. Having access to pre- and post-monitoring data will allow practitioners to assess if the goals of the project were met. ??Would Stan be interested in returning to the area and seeing what the fish assemblage is now??

The group discussed the debate regarding the need for monitoring. The challenge is the cost. The question is what percentage of the total project cost is enough to cover monitoring. Jim mentioned that MDE in the MS4 permit requires monitoring. There is a lot of discussion in various venues to determine what specific parameters need to be measured to determine if the goals of the project were met.

Jim discussed the value the Jones Falls: it has a higher density of brown trout than any other stream in Maryland. Tributary that is connected to Jones Falls has Brook trout and this tributary is listed in the MD trout management plan. The habitat limitation is related to unstable temperature regimes in some reaches. Twenty-five land use battles were won because of the temperature criteria for trout, but haven't been won. (These battles occurred after the comprehensive plan was developed and approved).

Restoration versus protection/conservation: MS-4 permits, WIP will require restoration. Billions of dollars will go to restoration. Let's use science to make some of the restoration actually work.

Discussion on fish habitat and zooplankton/food web in Jones Fall.

Next step:

- Provide a template, plan - how we would create a protection and restoration force for Jones Falls composed of volunteers.
- Reach out to a larger group (Bluewater Baltimore, etc), involve more people.
- Focus on all versus part of Jones Falls – what does the public want; involving a group of people more representative of what the public wants.
- Fact collecting mission: identify what is going on in the watershed and who is engaged; list of organizations we can reach out to who have an interest.

Action: Jim Gracie will draft a statement letting organizations know what “we” are interested in achieving. Asking for requests from people who are interested and what are they doing. Due January 23rd.

Action: Margaret will re-send the affiliates spreadsheet consisting of organizations that have/may have similar interests.

Goal:

- Protect the aquatic habitat in the watershed from future losses, and restore what is possible.

A report from the Jones Fall meeting will be given to the members present at the Habitat Work Group meeting following the conclusion of the Jones Falls prelude meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.